

The Best Way to Prevent A Negotiated Peace?

"Clamor for a negotiated peace was growing in Congress, among key allies and even within Administration councils. . . . In this atmosphere, the latest, most brazen guerrilla

blow at a U.S. installation in South Vietnam struck many U.S. policy makers, for many different reasons, as just the sort of provocation they have been looking for."

—"U.S. Risk in Vietnam", *Washington dispatch by Philip Geyelin in the Wall St. Journal, Feb. 8.*

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15 CENTS

There Should Have Been A Court Martial, Not A Reprisal

Modern psychology tells us that men unconsciously arrange what they secretly desire. Our Joint Chiefs of Staff and the South Vietnamese military have agitated for months to widen the war by reprisals against the North. The guerrilla attack on Pleiku gave them their opportunity. From a psychological point of view, it is not at all strange that the U.S. camp at Pleiku was so poorly defended. If the Generals had been as passionate about improving the security of Americans in Vietnam as they are about extending the war, the guerrillas would not have had so easy a time. The attack called for a court martial, not a reprisal raid; punishment for the slackness of the U.S. command, not a reward for its incompetence. A military court of inquiry would begin with the fact that this was not the first but the second attack of its kind. Guerrillas got away with a similar night attack Nov. 1 on Bien Hoa air base near Saigon, killing five Americans and destroying five jet bombers. The attack focussed attention on poor security arrangements, but there is no evidence that anything was done to improve them. On the contrary, eight Americans die and more than 100 are wounded three months later in a repeat performance. Again it turns out that the South Vietnamese guards were asleep at the switch, more than half of them absent, perhaps others in cahoots with the raiders.

A Double Warning Ignored

This is only the beginning of the story. The U.S. command was doubly on notice to expect trouble the morning the Pleiku attack occurred. It came exactly two hours after the end of the Viet Cong's one week cease-fire for the New Year holiday had expired. There was a burst of attacks at the same time by the rested guerrillas. Guard arrangements should have been especially strict that morning. In addition the Viet Cong's clandestine radio had announced during the holiday that a reprisal raid would be made for the public execution in Saigon a week earlier of a 20-year-old terrorist (the *Washington Post* Feb. 7 in its news roundup from Saigon). Since the U.S. was held responsible for the execution, the warning called for tightened security at every U.S. facility. Secretary McNamara's attempt at his briefing to brush off the possibility of better security arrangements casts doubt on his judgment. He is losing in Vietnam all the respect he earned at the Pentagon. His remarks about security rank in vapidty with his earlier discoveries that only 10 percent of the Vietnamese were Buddhists and that Gen. Khanh was a No. 1 fine fellow. Away from computers, in contact with human

McNamara at His Silliest

"The reasons for the tragic loss of American men killed and wounded in the Vietcong attack on Pleiku cannot be glossed over by Secretary McNamara saying, 'The fact is that the attack was carried out in the dead of night; it was a sneak attack. It's typical of guerrilla operations. It's the kind of attack that it's almost impossible to provide effective security against. . . .' The rules of war do not limit the fighting to the daylight hours between nine to five. Nor do the rules of war require that the enemy give us a certain number of hours advance notice before attacking. That is true whether it is a conventional war or a guerrilla war. Secretary McNamara cannot gloss over the lack of security at Pleiku by attributing our losses to a 'sneak' attack which we must expect because we are fighting a guerrilla war. Indeed Secretary McNamara's 'sneak attack' characterization may well deserve the award for the silliest statement of the year, if not in the whole history of statements from the Pentagon. The warriors there will know that surprise is an essential concomitant of military action in war."

—Gruening (D. Alaska) in the Senate, Feb. 8.

realities, the Secretary does not do so well. The Pleiku camp enjoyed an ideal location for security. The town is set in the center of a treeless plain and the two U.S. military compounds just outside of town "command an open view of several miles in almost all directions" (*Wash. Post* from Saigon, Feb. 7). When guerrillas can sneak across an open plain, cut through two perimeters of barbed wire and place explosive charges up against a wall, they demonstrate the dereliction of the U.S. command.

No one would guess from McNamara's briefing that this is what happened. He pictured the attack as purely a mortar attack from a distance, withholding the fact that the mortars which killed our men were our own make.* As for his remark, "I don't think it will ever be possible to protect our forces against sneak attacks of this kind", we would call at-

(Continued on Page Four)

* Mc George Bundy also tried to hide the truth about these mortars. "Three times Mr. Bundy said he did not believe the 81-mm mortars used by the guerrillas in Pleiku attack were American-made, but he referred the questions to the Defense Department," Charles Mohr reported in the *New York Times* Feb. 9. "A spokesman for the Pentagon said that it was 'an almost inescapable conclusion' that the mortars were American because no other army in the world uses such a caliber."

One Way to End the Dollar Crisis Is to End Our Intervention in Vietnam

Q. Is the war in Vietnam a big drain on U.S. dollars? **against the Communists is using up quite a bit of what has**
A. Indeed it is. The cost of helping South Vietnam **been saved elsewhere.**

—R. V. Roosa, former Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs, *U.S. News & World Report*, Feb. 8.

If We Acted in Selma As We Act in Saigon

Senator Eastland of Mississippi made a speech in the Senate Feb. 3. It was entitled "Communist Forces Behind Negro Revolution in This Country." It was the second major speech of its kind by Eastland. He made an earlier one last July 22 on "Communist Infiltration Into The So-called Civil Rights Movement," the latter remarkable because of its suggestion that the murder of the three civil rights workers last summer in Mississippi might be a hoax. It is instructive, and it may be therapeutic, to notice that Senator Eastland's theory of why there is trouble in our South is exactly the same as the theory propounded by Secretary of State Rusk as to why there is trouble in South Vietnam. The theory in both cases is that all would be well if only the North let its neighbors alone.

Like the State Department, Eastland sees not rebellion but an invasion, a "mass invasion of Mississippi", as he said last July, "by demonstrators, agitators, agents of provocation and

Sen. Stennis: This morning, as over the past several weeks, I gained special information about the activities of the Communists in Vietnam, on the other side of the world, where we have sent many thousands of our armed services personnel. Many of our servicemen have been killed trying to stem the tide of this very influence that the Senator from Mississippi [Eastland] is describing in such detail is going on in one of the States of the United States on the racial question. . . .

Sen. Eastland: Why should the Communist Party be permitted to take over a State of the Union?

—In the Senate, Feb. 3.

inciters to mass violence, under the cover of the so-called civil rights movements." Just as the Pentagon and State put out figures recently to show "Troop Flow From Hanoi Up Sharply" so Eastland provided the names, the subversive records and the border crossing dates of infiltration from the North. Eastland even cited the same alarmist journalistic sources. "By April of this year," Eastland told the Senate last July, "so much evidence had piled up of Communist infiltration and Communist influence in racial agitations that Mr. Joseph Alsop devoted one of his columns to what he called 'the unhappy secret' of Communist success in infiltrating the civil rights movement." To read the two speeches of Eastland and the supporting remarks of his Mississippi colleague, Stennis, is like reading the speeches of Rusk and McNamara about South Vietnam before Diem was overthrown—in both cases the picture is of a happy land and a contented people torn apart by outside agitators. One would never guess the misery, the beatings, the killings, the violations of elementary rights, the exploitation, which are the roots of the rebellions. No high born Mandarin from Hué could be more sorrowful than Stennis when he told the Senate Feb. 3 it was these Communist agitators "who flouted all the customs and traditions of a social order to which people had been accustomed and had lived under for almost two centuries." Eastland told the Senate the same day that 95 percent of the Negroes in his

Though the Negroes Spurned Them

Sen. Eastland: I would say that 95% of the Negroes in the area spurned any association with them [the civil rights workers] and condemned their coming. They condemned everything that the groups stood for.

Sen. Stennis: I found the same pattern of operations in the area in which I live. What we have discussed has been confirmed by the police and other responsible people in the community. . . .

Sen. Eastland: I know that members of the [civil rights] groups would go to town after town and try to obtain quarters in a Negro home, and there was not a Negro home in the town that would let the members of the groups remain there. . . .

Sen. Stennis: They were spurned by the colored people and everyone else. . . .

Sen. Eastland: I know of town after town in which that happened.

Sen. Stennis: In areas in which these people were able to stay, their activities would disrupt the business life, the social and the spiritual life of both races and generally disrupt the peace and harmony of the people. Is that not what the Senator found?

Sen. Eastland: That is correct.

—In the Senate, Feb. 3.

area had "spurned any association" with the invaders and Stennis said he found "the same pattern" in his area. But somehow by esoteric means these infiltrators managed nevertheless here and there to disrupt "the spiritual life of both races . . . the peace and harmony of the people." This is how the South felt a century ago about the abolitionists: snakes in a patriarchal paradise.

The sickness of the South is the sickness of every ruling class in history. These always see conspiracy rather than suffering as the mainspring of every upsurge by the oppressed. Eastland buttressed his speech with quotations from J. Edgar Hoover and ideological police records from the files of the Un-American Activities Committee and his own Internal Security Committee just as the State Department's "Blue Book" in 1961 justified our intervention in South Vietnam by citing evidence of Communist conspiracy against Diem. In one colloquy on the Senate floor Feb. 3 Eastland and Stennis agreed that South Vietnam and our own South were both confronted by the same universal conspiracy. They are as indignant about Washington's aid to the civil rights movement as Washington is indignant about Moscow's and Peking's encourage-

Subversion by S-x

Sen. Stennis: The white boys and white girls would live in Negro homes. They would sit in the courthouse square on park benches and they would love and hug and go down the streets holding hands. . . .

Sen. Eastland: I know of an instance in my home town in which a Negro woman cut her husband up because of his attention to one of those white girls.

—In the Senate, Feb. 3.

ment to the guerrilla fighters in South Vietnam. One almost expects to hear Eastland and Stennis ask how Washington can claim to be for peaceful co-existence and yet insist on supporting "wars of liberation" in the South. Or accuse old Ho Chi Johnson of persisting in his dastardly ambition to reunify the country.

There are even the same contradictions in both areas. Just as our government in South Vietnam oscillates between treat-

"In typical Marxist language, he [Jesse Gordon] has called police 'Fascists', thus supporting one of the long-time objectives of the Communist Party, to undermine respect for the police forces of the country. He has told Negroes, in public, that colored men are going to die, and that it is their choice whether they choose to die in Vietnam or Harlem."

—Eastland in the Senate last July 22.

ing the uprising as a rebellion and calling for social reforms to conciliate the people, so Stennis the day after Eastland's speech last week put into the Congressional Record the resolution passed by the Mississippi Economic Council, calling for law and order in the State. That resolution, the expression of Mississippi's better conscience, abandoned conspiracy theory and urged compliance with the civil rights laws. Stennis, to his credit, praised the Council for taking a "stand out front" for that "obedience to law" which is the foundation of "true liberty." It is difficult to reconcile what Stennis said

Palsy Walsy Dept.

"To his colleagues it is pretty breathtaking and a little awesome to watch the way Sen. Robert F. Kennedy is plunging into his job and also working for Robert F. Kennedy. . . . RFK is cementing his relations with a number of Southern Democratic Senators, including the powerful chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Sen. James O. Eastland of Mississippi, who is now remarking to colleagues, 'Bobby suggests this,' 'Bobby thinks that,' etc."

—Roscoe Drummond, Washington Post, Feb. 8.

to the Senate on Feb. 3 with what he said on Feb. 4.

Can we not learn something from the two situations? We see the idealism of the volunteers who go south here. Can we not see that in Vietnam we fight the same liberating zeal? In this double mirror, costly fallacies quickly show their face. If the Federal government handled Negro aspiration as it handles the revolt in South Vietnam, we would be sending "counter-insurgency" teams from Fort Bragg into the South to kill civil rights agitators. We would be burning out with napalm the Negro neighborhoods in which we suspected that CORE or SNCC workers were hiding.

Conversely, if the South had an Air Force at its disposal, we would be hearing a clamor in Mississippi for escalation of the war by bombarding the source of all the trouble. Since Washington persists in giving aid and comfort to the civil rights rebels, why not bomb the supply lines and the source?

The Only Reporter Who Pointed Out The Holes in McNamara's Air Strike Briefing

"The official explanations of the events surrounding the American air strike on North Vietnam have left a number of important questions unanswered. . . . One question involves the weapons used by the attacking Vietcong unit. The heaviest were American-made 81-mm. mortars. . . . The question is, therefore, that if the Vietcong unit at Pleiku was—as is so often the case—using captured weapons, would this sustain the argument that North Vietnam made possible this particular attack?

"Administration sources also contend that the size and intensity of the attack indicated that it was a major blow carefully timed by Hanoi. Yet reports from the field indicate that a company—or less—of Vietcong troops took part. A Vietcong company is estimated to have 200 to 300 men. This is not a large Vietcong assault. Many are much larger. There were American casualties, but the attack was not especially intense. On a number of occasions whole South Vietnamese infantry units up to company size have

been wiped out by the Vietcong in night assaults.

"Another factor advanced by Government sources is a belief that attacks launched the same night at Tuy Hoa and a group of villages near Nhatrang indicated . . . a pattern of over-all direction, probably from Hanoi. Since larger numbers of Vietcong attacks have taken place throughout South Vietnam on other nights, it is asked, why would this be?

"Secretary McNamara . . . at his news conference . . . said he did not believe 'it would ever be possible to protect our forces against a sneak attack of that kind' and added that the mortars had been fired from a considerable distance and that clumps of foliage on the generally open plateau had offered cover. Reports from Pleiku, however, later established that the Vietcong attackers had been able to crawl right onto the United States helicopter base to place explosive charges against barracks' walls on the airstrip."

—Charles Mohr in the New York Times, Feb. 8.

And Here Is The Story of His Bitter Experience in Trying to Cover the War Honestly

"The most curious attack of all on the Saigon press corps came from Time magazine. . . . The Time reporters in the field felt strongly that the magazine was giving too optimistic a view of the war. Periodically, Charles Mohr, Time's chief correspondent in Southeast Asia (who had once been described by Henry Luce himself as 'A reporter—and how!') would return to New York for conferences where he would argue for tougher coverage on Vietnam. But his editors, who had lunched with Secretary McNamara and other Pentagon officials and had seen the most secret charts and the most secret arrows, would explain patiently to him that he understood only a portion of 'the big picture'. . . .

" . . . in early September [1963], with Washington still searching for answers, Mohr was asked to do a roundup on the entire state of the war in Vietnam. He and his colleague, Mert Perry . . . began with this lead: 'The war in Vietnam is being lost.' . . . It was not what the editors of

Time magazine wanted to hear. Mohr's story was killed in New York, and an optimistic piece was printed instead bearing no relation to the copy he had filed, and assuring the world that 'government troops are fighting better than ever.' . . . Otto Fuerbringer, the managing editor of Time, summoned a writer into his office and (as Stanley Karnow, Mohr's predecessor as Time bureau chief in Southeast Asia, put it in Nieman Reports) with 'nothing but his own preconceptions to guide him, dictated the gist of an article for his magazine's Press Section . . . a devastating compendium of bitter innuendoes and clever generalities, all blatantly impeaching American correspondents in Vietnam for distorting the news.' . . . The upshot was that they both resigned, Mohr eventually going to the Times, where he soon became the White House correspondent, and Perry to the Chicago Daily News."

—David Halberstam, in Commentary, January.

Destroying North Vietnam Will Not Save South Vietnam

(Continued from Page One)

tention to an item on the AP ticker Feb. 8 (AP-151) which turned up in none of the many papers we read. "Anyone who has ever gone to war and fought on a perimeter defense," this dispatch said of McNamara's answer, "must be asking: What happened to the night patrols? Where were the listening posts? Has the practice of staking out enemy routes of approach been abandoned? Was there no illumination available, such as parachute flares or artificial moonlight—searchlights aimed against the clouds?" The AP dispatch said the questions "were asked of the Pentagon" and that the "official reply was, 'we don't know'." "Whatever the eventual answers," the AP concluded, "the explanation of the beating at Pleiku is going to be difficult."

Madison Avenue Clausewitzes

In this the AP is wrong. The Pentagon is accustomed to winning by public relations at home the battles it loses abroad. The AP dispatch was seen by only a handful of people while millions will read reassuring stories like the one in the *New York Times* Feb. 9 which quoted unnamed Pentagon officials as saying that defense arrangements at U.S. installations in Vietnam are "good". There will be an inquiry at Pleiku like that which followed the attack on Bien Hoa Nov. 1 but already "an official U.S. military assessment" has been turned in declaring that "a 'good job' was done in protecting the area." A few more such good jobs and we will have excuse enough to bomb Peking as well as Hanoi. We believe the Pleiku attack is another in the series of warning glimpses (like the Bay of Pigs) which should alert this country to the fact that while our military have enormous firepower and probably the best press agents in the world, they don't do so well in the test that matters. Their judgment, especially in guerrilla war, where the human factor counts more than the technological, is faulty. Their intelligence often turns out to be poor. But they have a great capacity for whitewashing their blunders and keeping the truth from the public. This is how military men have drawn great empires into catastrophe before.

It is time for the government to stop lying to the people.

GOP Repulsed Anyway

"Johnson's call for Republican and Democratic leaders to sit with the [National] Security Council was in line with his actions in bringing both parties into the decision making process on Vietnam. By this device he appears to have sidetracked a massive Republican attack on his Asian policies. Before the week-end's military action, Congressional Republicans had been waiting only for a Presidential assessment of an on-the-spot report from Saigon by his special fact-finder George Bundy before blasting away at Johnson's course. They suspected Bundy's recommendations would be for, as they put it, 'more of the same' in South Vietnam with no spectacular acceleration of American effort there. They were poised in this case to demand what House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan called 'forcible action'."

—AP in Washington Evening Star, Feb. 8.

The South Vietnamese regime is one we have tried to impose on its people against their will. The South Vietnamese military are cowardly, fearful and incompetent, more concerned with intrigue in Saigon than war in the field. Their only hope is to involve the U.S. directly in the fighting; that is why they want to "widen the war". Our military are frustrated because all their highly advertised and chrome-plated "counter-insurgency" has failed. All they understand is brute nuclear force and that is what they would like to apply. They want to change a war they cannot win into a war they believe they can win. Even in this they are wrong. Command of the air and the levelling of all North Korea did not save us from being pushed back to the 38th parallel and forced to make peace. If we bomb North Vietnam, we can destroy all its people have built up but we cannot prevent Gen. Giap's army from taking over all South Vietnam. And if the war brings China in—there is a military morass in which sensational bombardments will not keep our best youth from being bled slowly to death. The President spoke to the Boy Scouts about not letting freedom perish from the earth. This is a bad time for such inanity. It is not freedom we are protecting in South Vietnam but our prestige and our right to dictate to other peoples. The sooner we negotiate our way out the better for all mankind.

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